

Project Area/Background

Project area is approximately 9,500 acres. Species distribution across the project area includes grand fir, spruce, Douglas-fir, lodgepole and cedar. Over 70% of the project area is dominated by grand fir or a grand fir/spruce mix. Past harvest has occurred since the 1970s on 18% of the project area. Numerous locations of known tree mortality from insect defoliators have been identified. Both aerial mapping and on-the-ground data confirmed tree mortality. This mortality is expected to increase over the next 2-3 years. Defoliation varied from 10%-80%. Stands in the larger size classes showed signs of root disease as well.

The Green Horse project area is within an area on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest that has been affected by the western hemlock looper. Public outreach about the western hemlock looper began during late summer and into the fall of 2019. A community meeting took place in Elk City, Idaho where community members invited Forest Service staff and a presentation about the looper was given and community members inquired about effects of the looper and management options.

The project was developed to be consistent with the goals of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program proposal as well the desired conditions in the Selway-Middle Fork Clearwater River Subbasin Assessment (USDA 2001), the Nez Perce National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA 1987); as well as the Idaho County Natural Resources Plan.

Need for Green Horse Proposal

- improve forest health, change species composition and stand structure to create a more resilient and resistant stand (i.e. a healthier, more resilient stand that is less susceptible to disease),
- reduce hazardous fuels and wildfire risk to timber resources,
- reduce hazardous fuel loads along roads for public safety and firefighter ingress/egress to protect timber resources and recreational opportunities within the project area, and
- provide a sustained yield of resource outputs as directed in the Forest Plan.

Proposed Action

- 1,750 of regeneration harvest,
- 570 acres of prescribed burning,
- 2 miles of temporary road construction,
- 26 miles of road reconditioning, and 19 miles of road reconstruction.

Project includes approximately 180 acres of regeneration harvest along existing system roads within the West Meadow Creek and O'Hara-Falls Creek Idaho Roadless Areas; as well as 268 acres of prescribed burning within the O'Hara-Falls Creek IRA.

Anticipated project timeline

Combined scoping/30-day comment: December 2019-January 2020

Response to comment and resource analysis: February-March 2020

EA & Draft Decision Notice with Objection filing legal notice: April 2020

Final Decision Notice: August 2020



